

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 MMS-01 EB-07 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1535

INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY QUITO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 7796

EO 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: CI, PFOR, PINT, PGOV

SUBJ: CHILEAN JUNTA IN ITS SECOND YEAR

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 5559; (B) SANTIAGO A-231

1. SUMMARY. REFTEL REPORTED ON STATUS OF CHILEAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT ON EVE OF FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF SEPTEMBER 1973 COUP. EMBASSY DEC 20 POUCHED AN UPDATED ANALYSIS IN AIRGRAM FORM (REF B). BASIC SITUATION HAS NOT CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY IN PAST THREE MONTHS. REGIME HAS MUCH TO ITS CREDIT, BUT CHILE CONTINUES TO HAVE AN AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT THAT IS FIRMLY IN CONTROL. WHILE SOME CHANGES MAY BE MADE IN EFFORT TO IMPROVE CHILE'S WORLD IMAGE, EMBASSY DOES NOT ANTICIPATE FUNDAMENTAL REORIENTATION IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. INDEED, FOREIGN CRITICISM AND

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INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION COULD INTENSIFY GO-IT-ALONE

PSYCHOLOGY. AT SAME TIME THERE ARE NOW SOME SIGNS OF INTERNAL TENSION, AND SITUATION COULD BECOME LESS STABLE IF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS DETERIORATE FURTHER. END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY JUNTA SINCE SEPTEMBER 1973 HAS RESTORED INTERNAL ORDER AND DOMESTIC TRANQUILLITY, UNDERTAKEN DRASTIC ECONOMIC MEASURE TO BRING COUNTRY OUT OF CHAOS, AND EMBARKED ON WIDE PROGRAM OF DOMESTIC REFORMS. LEADERS ARE HONEST, HIGHLY MOTIVATED MEN WHO FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR WELL-BEING OF THEIR COUNTRY AND PEOPLE, BUT THEIR GOVERNMENT IS AUTHORITATIAN AND REPRESSIVE, INWARD LOOKING AND NATIONALISTIC. REGIME IS DOMINATED BY SHARPLY ANTI-MARXIST OUTLOOK INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY, AND IT TENDS TO BLAME ITS TROUBLES AND OUTSIDE CRITICISM ON "INTERNATIONAL MARXIST CONSPIRACY." JUNTA IS FIRMLY IN CONTROL; LOCAL TERRORIST OPPOSITION IS SMASHED; PARTIES ARE OUTLAWED OR LARGELY IMPOTENT; COUNTRY IS QUIET, AND THERE IS NO INDICATION OF ANY STRONG, MASS DEMAND FOR CHANGE. LARGE MAJORITY OF CHILEANS STILL APPEAR TO SUPPORT GOC OR AT LEAST ACCEPT IT PASSIVELY.

3. THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OR POLICIES, BUT THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE CHANGE IN ATMOSPHERE AND A SHARPENING OF ATTITUDES SINCE LAST SEPTEMBER'S CELEBRATIONS. FOR ONE THING, GOC WAS ON THE UPSWING THEN, AND THE SUCCESSFUL, TROUBLE-FREE CELEBRATION INCREASED JUNTA'S SELF-CONFIDENCE. NEWS OF "TRANSCENDENT" IMPORTANCE WE HAD BEEN LED TO EXPECT, HOWEVER, TURNED OUT A NEAR FIZZLE. GENERAL PINOCHET'S PROGRAM TO RELEASE PERSONS DETAINED FOR SECURITY REASONS WAS SHOWN TO HAVE STRONG PROPAGANDISTIC OVERTONES, AND IT IS STILL NOT FAR OFF THE GROUND IN PRACTICAL TERMS. GOC, HOWEVER, CONTINES TO SEE IT AS A MAJOR CONCESSION TO HUMAN RIGHTS CRITICS, AND FAILS TO UNDERSTAND ITS LACK OF IMPACT ON WORLD OPINION. IN ADDITION, IT TURNED OUT THE TERMINATION OF FORMA STATE OF WAR AND ITS REPLACEMENT BY LEGAL STATE OF SIEGE/ INTERNAL DEFENSE RESULTED IN NO CHANGE IN EXTRAORDINARY AUTHORITY AVAILABLE TO GOVERNMENT, AND PRODUCED NO CHANGE IN INTERNAL SECURITY PRACTICES OR IN PSYCHOLOGICAL-POLITICAL CLIMATE.

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4. SECOND ELEMENT IN THIS EVOLVING SITUATION HAS BEEN GOC PREOCCUPATION WITH CONTINUING INTERNAL RESISTANCE TO ITS FULL CONTROL. OF LATE THIS HAS CENTERED LARGELY ON ITS ONLY ACTIVE TERRORIST ENEMY - MOVEMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT (MIR). AFTER FAILURE OF AN ATTEMPT TO NEGOTIATE SOME SORT OF SETTLEMENT WITH MIR, AND SUBSEQUENT DISCOVERY OF MIR PLANS FOR TERRORISM AND SUBVERSION, GOC, IN EARLY OCTOBER, LAUNCHED ATTACK ON IT THROUGH SERIOES OF SHOOT-OUTS,

SEIZURES OF ARMS CACHES AND HIDEOUTS, AND HEAVY PUBLICITY RE DOCUMENTS CONTAINING ALLEGED PLANS FOR WIDE-SPREAD TERRORIST OPERATIONS. IN THIS ATMOSPHERE, DOMESTIC POLITICAL CLIMATE HAS NATURALLY FAILED TO IMPROVE. AT THE MOMENT MIR IS ON VERGE OF EXTINCTION, BUT JUNTA IS NOT RELAXING ITS INTERNAL SECURITY CONTROLS. ON CONTRARY, IF ANYTHING WE PERCEIVE AN INCREASING SENSITIVITY EVEN TO ORDINARY MANIFESTATIONS OF NORMAL POLITICAL OPPOSITION: THE PRECIPITATE EXPUSION OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER RENAN FUENTEALBA FOR MERELY GIVING A MIDLY CRITICAL INTERVIEW TO A FOREIGN JOURNALIST IS THE MOST RECENT CASE IN POINT.

5. THIRD NOTEWORTHY DEVELOPMENT IS CHILE'S INCREASED ISOLATION FROM OUTSIDE WORLD. AS GOC SEES IT, SUCCESS OF "INTERNATIONAL MARXIST CAMPAIGN" AGAINST CHILE WAS SHOWN IN TOW HOSTILE UNGA RESOLUTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS IN OCTOBER, AND ON SIMILAR ACTIONS IN OTHER MULTILATER FORUMS. IRONICALLY, REPORTS OF INVESTIGATING GROUPS PERMITTED TO VISIT CHILE AND OBSERVE CONDITIONS UNDERGIRD THESE ACTIONS: OAS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REPORT WAS ESPECIALLY DAMAGING. REACTION OF GOC AND SUPPORTERS WAS TO MOBILIZE MAJOR OUTPOURING OF CONDEMNATION OF ATTACKERS, AND TO STRESS NEED FOR INTERNAL NATIONAL UNITY WHATEVER THE COST IN INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION. AT SAME TIME, CONCERN OVER SUPPOSED PERUVIAN THREAT HAS INCREASED, AND RECENT MEXICAN BREAK IN RELATION WAS A SHOCK. GOC SPOKESMEN HAVE BECOME STILL MORE AGGRESSIVELY ANTI-COMMUNIST; THERE HAVE BEEN MORE COMMENTS ABOUT THE FOOLISHNESS OF A POLICY OF DETENTE; AND THERE HAVE EVEN BEEN A FEW EDITORIAL SUGGESTIONS HINTING AT A MOVE AWAY FROM THE UNITED STATES. GENERAL ATMOSPHERE AROUND GOVERNMENT HAS HARDENED. CONTINUING FOREIGN CRITICISM AND INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION OF GOC, ESPECIALLY
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IF IT SEEMS SHARPLY OVERDRAWN, COULD CAUSE EVEN GREATER TURN INWARD AND MAKE JUNTA STILL LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO OUTSIDE AMELIORATING INFLUENCES OR INTERNAL CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM.

6. ECONOMIC PROSPECTS ALSO HAVE CHANGED. BIND IN WHICH GOC FINDS ITSELF IS EVEN MORE CLEAR (FALLING COPPER PRICES; RISING PRICES OF ESSENTIAL IMPORTS; INFLATIONARY EFFECT OF HIGH GOVERNMENT SPENDING), AND WE FORESEE MOST SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN CLOSING MAJOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE GAP FOR 1975 (SANTIAGO 7588).

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R 271507Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 7796

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7. ALL THESE FACTORS HAVE LED IN PAST FEW WEEKS TO INCREASING SIGNS OF DISQUIET AND DOUBT WITHIN GOC AND AMONG POLITICALLY CONSCIOUS LOCAL OBSERVERS. WE NOTE FOLLOWING IN PARTICULAR:

A. JUDICIAL ASSERTIVENESS: IN A FEW CASES, CIVIL COURTS HAVE TAKEN STEPS WHICH CAUTIOUSLY CHALLENGE ACTIONS OF SECURITY OFFICIALS. ACTION SO FAR HAS BEEN ONLY PROCEDURAL AND MINOR IN EFFECT, BUT TREND BEARS WATCHING.

B. "EL MERCURIO" EDITORIALS: ORDINARILY SLAVISHLY ADULATORY, OR MILDLY CRITICAL FROM THE RIGHTS, THIS ESTABLISHED

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LISMENT PAPER SEVERAL TIMES RECENTLY HAS GENTLY NUDGED GOC: SAYS MILITARY AMBASSADORS ARE NOT ALWAYS FLEXIBLE ENOUGH FOR DIPLOMACY; INFLEXIBLY ANTI-COMMUNIST LINE IS NOT NECESSARILY PRODUCTIVE; AND WHAT GOC DOES DEMOSTICALLY HAS MORE EFFECT ON CHILE'S WORLD IMAGE THAN ACTION OF MARXISTS OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY.

C. FUENTALBA CASE: CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS: (PDC) UNIFIED REACTION TO HASTY AND ARBITRARY EXPULSION OF PARTY LEADER, GOC'S NON-ACTION GAINST PARTY, OPPOSITION OF SOME GOC MEMBERS TO EXPULSION, AND GOC LEADERS' SECOND-THOUGHT REGRETS INDICATE EDGINESS ON PART OF JUNTA AND EXISTENCE OF SOME SORT OF THRESHOLD TO PEREMPTORY GOVT PROCEDURES.

D. ARELLANO SPEECH: DEC 4 SPEECH TO TROOPS BY GENERAL KNOWN FOR PDC CONTACTS WAS NOTABLY MODERATE FOR SUCH AN OCCASION.

E. BONILLA DETENTION RUMORS: PERSISTENT, UNFOUNDED (WE BELIEVE) RUMORS THAT DEFENSE MINISTER, WHO ALSO HAS PDC TIES, HAS BEEN DETAINED AT HOME, RATHER THAN ILL, ALSO REFLECT UNSETTLED ATMOSPHERE.

F. CIVILIAN AMBASSADORS: REPORTS THAT GOC WILL REORGANIZE FOREIGN OFFICE AND REPLACE SOME OF ITS MILITARY AMBASSADORS WITH CIVILIANS, INCLUDING CHILEAN AMB IN WASHINGTON, INDICATE GROWING RECOGNITION OF MASSIVE CHILEAN EXTERNAL PUBLIC RELATIONS FAILURE. DIFFICULTY GOC IS APPARENTLY EXPERIENCING IN FINDING QUALIFIED PERSONS WILLING TO SERVE IS ANOTHER INDICATION OF UNSETTLEMENT.

G. WIN INTERNALLY; LOSE EXTERNALLY: ON RETURN FROM RECENT TRIP TO U.S.; ECONOMIC MINISTER LENIZ TOLD PRESS HE HAD INFORMED JUNTA THAT CHILE'S IMAGE ABROAD CAN AFFECT PROGRAM OF NATIONAL RECOVERY. HIGHLY MOTIVATED AND COMPETENT INTELLIGENCE OFFICER HAS TOLD DIPLOMATS, INCLUDING EMBOFF, "WE ARE WINNING INTERNAL WAR BUT LOSING EXTERNAL WAR." THIS IS MAJOR ELEMENT IN JUNTA RE-THINKING WHICH MAY LEAD TO ACCELERATION OF GOC DETAINEE RELEASE PROGRAM IN PRES. PINOCHET'S YEAR-END STATEMENT.

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H. SIGNS OF JUMPINESS AND SHORT TEMPER OF SENIOR LEADERS, AS RESULT OF OVERWORK AND FRUSTRATIONS: THIS IS ACCOMPANIED BY INSISTENT TALK ABOUT NEED FOR CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND LEADERS, SPECIFICALLY INTRODUCING MORE CIVILIANS.

8. PERHAPS MOST TELLING SHOCK FOR GOC AND INFORMED OPINION

COMES FROM CHILEAN REALIZATION THAT SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY A SUBSTANTIAL GAP IN PERCEPTION HAS OPENED UP BETWEEN THEM AND THE U.S. GOVT. GOC APPARENTLY WAS TAKEN ABACK AT DIFFERENCE IN USG AND CHILEAN VIEWPOINTS RE USSR, PERU, AND CHILE'S PROBLEMS OF INTERNAL SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS, AS REVEALED DURING NOVEMBER VISIT OF DEPARTMENT POLICY PLANNERS. CONGRESSIONAL CUT-OFF OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN HEAVY BLOW. GOC HAS BELATEDLY AWAKENED TO FACT THAT ITS INTERNAL SECURITY PRACTICES DIRECTLY AFFECT USG'S ABILITY TO COOPERATE-- ESPECIALLY IN MILITARY SENSE.

9. THUS SITUATION AT THIS MOMENT PRESENTS ELEMENTS OF PARADOX. ON THE ONE HAND, THROUGH ITS SUCCESSFUL REPRESSION OF VIOLENT OPPOSITION AND ITS ENERGETIC APPROACH TO CERTAIN DOMESTIC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS, JUNTA IS SEEING OUT 1974 WITH ITS DOMESTIC POSITION UNTHREATENED. ON THE OTHER HAND, CRITICISM AND ISOLATION OF CHILE FROM OUTSIDE, PLUS INTERNAL ECONOMIC STRAINS AND UNHAPPINESS OF THOSE CHILEANS AFFECTED BY WIDE-RANGING INTERNAL SECURITY MEASURES AND ABSENCE OF POLITICAL FREEDOMS, HAVE RESULTED IN PERSISTENT AND PROBABLY INCREASING SIGNS OF TENSION INSIDE THE COUNTRY. QUESTION NOW IS HOW JUNTA INTENDS TO RESPOND TO THESE DISQUIETING CIRCUMSTANCES.

10. BOTH EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL OPPOSITION MIGHT BE MODERATED IF GOC WERE TO RESTRAIN OPERATIONS OF ITS SEVERAL INTERNAL SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS, BEGIN TO REINSTITUTE TRADITIONAL CHILEAN LEGAL SAFEGUARDS FOR PERSONS DETAINED ON SUSPICION AND PERMIT SOME REVIVAL OF NORMAL POLITICAL PROCESSES WITHIN THIS POLITICALLY SENSITIVE COUNTRY. SUCH DEVELOPMENTS, HOWEVER, WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR CHILE'S CURRENT LEADERS TO SWALLOW. MOST OF THEM ARE NOW COMMITTED TO VIEW THAT CHILE'S ILLS SPRING ABOUT AS MUCH FROM TRADITIONAL LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES AS FROM ALLENDE'S MARXISM PER SE, AND THAT THEY MUST CREATE A NEW AND PURIFIED STYLE OF DEMOCRACY WHICH WILL ACT FOR GOOD

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OF ENTIRE NATIONAL COMMUNITY RATHER THAN FOR SECTARIAN OR PARTY INTERESTS (AS THEY SEE THEM). IN THE INTERIM, THEY CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON IN THE INTERNAL SECURITY AREA, SO THAT INSTITUTION BUILDING OF THE KIND THEY DESIRE CAN PROCEED WITHOUT HINDRANCE BY THE SORT OF TERRORISM AND ANARCHY THEY PERCEIVE IN ARGENTINA AND SOME OTHER COUNTRIES.

11. THE WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE SEEMS TO US TO INDICATE THAT JUNTA WILL CONSIDER IT IS MAKING GREAT CONCESSIONS TO MISGUIDED OR MALEVOLENT FOREIGN CRITICS, BY SUCH INITIAL STEPS AS RELEASE OF MORE DETAINEES. WHEN CRITICS DEMAND MORE FAR-REACHING ACTION, SOME OF THE GOVT'S IDEOLOGICAL ADVISERS

WILL ARGUE THAT APPEASEMENT HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH, AND THAT FURTHER CONCESSIONS WOULD IMPERIL THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW CHILE THE JUNTA SEEKS. IN RECENT MONTHS, CHILEANS IN AND OUT OF GOVT WHO HAVE BEEN ARGUING FOR SOME MEASURE OF INTERNAL RECONCILIATION IN ORDER TO GIVE THE GOVT A BROADER BASE OF POLITICAL SUPPORT HAVE FAILED TO MAKE THEIR POINT WITH THE JUNTA. THE PRESSURE I NOW MUCH GREATER, BUT IT IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN THAT CURRENT GOC LEADERS CAN BE SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION.
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